

Title II, Part D: Enhancing Education through Technology *Partnership Grant - Learning Network of Vermont*

BACKGROUND

Videoconferencing and other forms of distance learning are increasingly important to Vermont schools. With improvements in videoconferencing technology, video compression, and online collaboration tools, it is conceivable to run videoconferencing traffic over a school's broadband Internet connection. While the quality of service of such connections will vary, with appropriate technical support and professional development, most schools will be able to achieve reasonable video and audio connections.

The purpose of this Title II, Part D (Enhancing Education through Technology) competitive grant is to provide support and professional development for Vermont schools with high poverty and the greatest need for technology support and/or schools identified for improvement in using the distance learning tools of the Learning Network of Vermont or LNV. The LNV is an IP-based videoconferencing network with 68 sites in Vermont high schools and several other locations. The original videoconferencing network in Vermont schools, relying upon dedicated T1 access using ATM protocol, was terminated in May 2005. In mid-2006 the LNV re-emerged as an IP-based network using a school's existing broadband connectivity. The system includes "head end" (133 State Street, Montpelier, VT) services such as a 100-port, Multi-point Control Unit (MCU or bridge), ECS Gatekeeper, and iView Communications Manager (ICM) scheduling software running over a 100-megabit connection.

As this new network develops, support and professional development for users of the network and local site coordinators are critical if its use is to expand. Technical coordination with staff at the head end is also required.

| TIMELINE FOR TITLE IID GRANT APPLICATIONS | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Application Release | November 22, 2006 |
| Submission Deadline (Received in VT DOE) | December 22, 2006 4:00PM |
| Award Announcements | January 2, 2007 |
| Project Implementation | January 2, 2007 – June 30, 2008 |

ELIGIBILITY

The grant will be awarded to an eligible local partnership consisting of at least one high-needs LEA *and* at least one of the following:

- An LEA that can demonstrate that teachers in its schools are effectively integrating technology and proven teaching practices into instruction, based on a review of relevant research, and that the integration results in improvement in classroom instruction and in helping students meet challenging academic standards.
- An institution of higher education that is in full compliance with the reporting requirements of section 207(f) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, and that has not been identified by the State as low-performing under that act.
- A for-profit business or organization that develops, designs, manufactures, or produces technology products or services or has substantial expertise in the application of technology in instruction.
- A public or private nonprofit organization with demonstrated expertise in the application of educational technology in instruction.

For purposes of this competition, a “high-needs local educational agency” is an LEA that:

- Includes one or more schools with the highest numbers or percentages of children from low-income families in the state (using current Census data) *or*
- Serves one or more schools identified for improvement or corrective action under NCLB (§1116), *or*
- Has a substantial need for assistance in acquiring and using technology.

REQUIREMENTS for an LEA to receive funding under this program:

- All schools in the LEA must have a current Educational Technology Plan approved by the Department of Education through June 30, 2007.
- All schools in the LEA must participate in the annual Technology Indicators Data Collection conducted by the Department of Education.
- The LEA must certify that all high-needs schools in the LEA meet requirements under the Children’s Internet Protection Act.
- The recipient must use a minimum of twenty-five percent (25%) of these funds for ongoing, sustained, intensive, high-quality professional development in integrating and using advanced technologies in instruction and in new learning environments.

GRANT DESCRIPTION

EXPECTATIONS

The recipient of this grant will develop and implement a statewide support system for LNV users, local technicians and others. A priority is to create more skilled and knowledgeable staff at each of the schools and other supporting sites resulting in a largely user-driven, self-managed network. The ultimate goal is to establish systems and supports that promote self-sufficiency in expanded and more creative uses for videoconferencing. Therefore, a major component of the work will be for the recipient to treat every incident of support as a professional development opportunity.

Applications should describe how support for LNV users, technical specialists and the system

will be accomplished in four major areas:

1. Support for local technical staff to help solve configuration problems, make needed adjustments to routers, firewalls and related equipment, support inclusion of off network sites, and ensure the best possible audio/video transmission for both point-to-point and multipoint videoconference calls;
2. End user support and professional development that grows local expertise in use of the online scheduling system, the videoconferencing system, and in the development of innovative uses for videoconferencing;
3. Creation of a Web site to provide general information about the system, FAQs, troubleshooting information, contact information for school personnel, general information regarding LNV and educational videoconferencing in general, advanced and entrepreneurial educational applications of videoconferencing and other helpful resources
4. Support for the online scheduling system and other system-level technical support needed to ensure proper functioning of the system.

Applicants should address each of the major areas by describing how the expectation will be met, who will be responsible for the work, and how the applicant will know whether adequate support has been provided.

Questions or clarifications needed? Contact:

Bill Romond
Vermont Department of Education
120 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501
Bill.romond@state.vt.us
802-828-0064

Application Format and Content

Grant applications shall be **NO MORE THAN SIX (6) PAGES**, single-spaced, font sizes 10-12, for sections 1-4 (below). The Cover Sheet and Budget Table sections are separate.

- 1. Program Description Narrative** (no more than 3 pages) Specifically address how each of the expectations in the Grant Description section will be accomplished and who will be the responsible party for accomplishing the work. As appropriate for each requirement, describe the professional development that will occur as part of the description. For any appropriate function, indicate how it will contribute to the long-term sustainability of the LNV system. **(60 points)**
- 2. Capacity for Success** (no more than 1 page) Describe why the partnership you are proposing has the capacity to accomplish the tasks required in this project. In this section describe the pertinent experience the partnership has in videoconferencing support and any other related distance learning experiences. **(15 points)**
- 3. Evaluation** (no more than 1 page) Describe the process you will follow to evaluate this grant both during the grant period and at the completion of the grant. In this section, include:
 - The important evaluation questions to be used to determine the effectiveness of this project in expanding the quality and quantity of videoconferencing use.
 - A description of how relevant data will be collected.
 - A description of how findings will be analyzed and used to make programmatic improvements. **(15 points)**
- 4. Budget Narrative** (no more than 1 page) Note: You must also complete the Budget Table. The budget narrative should demonstrate a logical connection to the program description (#1 above), and should be specific enough to give reviewers an idea of your priorities and focus for funding. The narrative should include:
 - Justification for the major expenditures proposed, especially salaries.
 - Explanation of any items on the budget sheet that may not be fully clear to the reviewers. **(10 Points)**
- 5. Budget Table:** See template following Selection Process.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

Submission is a TWO-STEP process. BOTH steps are required. Submissions must include the Proposal Cover Page (see page 7) with the superintendent's signature and sections 1-5.

Step One: Hard copy: Three paper copies (Original plus two (2) copies) must be mailed or hand-delivered to:

Title II, Part D Technology Grants - c/o Bill Romond
Vermont State Department of Education
120 State Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05620-2501

NOTE: Hard copies must be ***received (not postmarked)*** by 4:00 pm on December 22, 2006.

Step Two: E-mailed copy: Send an electronic version of the application to bill.romond@state.vt.us in either Microsoft Word (.doc), Rich Text (.rtf) or Portable Document Format (.pdf) format by 4:00 pm on December 22.

SELECTION PROCESS

All proposals will be read and reviewed by an independent review panel. The following Scoring Rubric will be used to rate each application.

Scoring Rubric: Enhancing Education through Technology

| Criteria | Poor | Average | Excellent |
|---|--------|---------|-----------|
| Program Description Clearly describe what this partnership will do with the funds. In addition to a clear description of the activities to be undertaken, points will be assigned for addressing the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Are all expectations specifically and clearly addressed?</i> • <i>Are responsible parties identified?</i> • <i>Are quality & quantity of professional development described?</i> • <i>Is there evidence of sustainability achieved through this project?</i> | 0 – 20 | 21 – 40 | 41 – 60 |
| Program Description – Total Score (Maximum is 60 pts) | | | |
| Capacity for Success Describe why this partnership has the capacity to accomplish the tasks required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is there extensive experience represented in this proposal?</i> • <i>Are other distance learning experiences represented?</i> | 0 – 5 | 6 – 10 | 11 – 15 |
| Capacity for Success – Total Score (Maximum is 15 pts) | | | |
| Evaluation Describe the process you will follow to evaluate this grant. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is there a clear description of the evaluation process during and at the end of the grant?</i> • <i>Are evaluation questions clear, thorough and appropriate?</i> • <i>Is there a clear and reasonable approach to gathering data?</i> • <i>How will your findings be reported?</i> | 0 – 5 | 6 – 10 | 11 – 15 |
| Evaluation – Total Score (Maximum is 15 pts) | | | |
| Budget Narrative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is there a logical and complete connection to the Program Description?</i> • <i>Are expenditures Justified and reasonable (especially salaries)?</i> • <i>Is there an explanation of potentially unclear items?</i> | 0 – 3 | 4 – 7 | 8 – 10 |
| Budget – Total Score (Maximum is 10 pts) | | | |
| TOTAL SCORE (Maximum is 100 pts) | _____ | | |

Budget Table

| Budget (Describe as appropriate) | TOTAL |
|---|--------------|
| Professional Development | |
| Evaluation | |
| Salary & Wages | |
| Infrastructure | |
| Hardware | |
| Software | |
| Travel | |
| Consultants & Contracts | |
| Teacher Stipends | |
| Equipment | |
| Web site Development | |
| Other (equipment rental, printing) | |
| | |
| | |
| TOTAL | |

- Please use Budget Narrative to elaborate and/or describe further

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Partnership Grant – Learning Network of Vermont

PROPOSAL COVER PAGE

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| School District or SU | |
| Contact Person | |
| Phone | |
| E-mail | |
| Partner Organization(s) | |
| Partner Contact Person | |
| Partner Phone | |
| Partner e-mail | |
| | |
| Total Funds Requested | |
| Superintendent's Signature | |
| Date | |